

Meeting Minutes

Ecological Resources Committee

May 24, 2005

ATTENDEES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chris Shutes (ERC Member), Paul J. Creger, (ERC Member), Alice Q. Howard (ERC Member), Stafford Lehr (CDFG), Cheryl Mulder (USFS), Beth Paulson (USFS), Leonard Turnbeaugh (Alpine County Public Works), Richard D. Wentzel (ERC Member), Wayne Hubbard (EID), Cheri Jaggars (EID), Shane Jiang (EID), Liz Mansfield (EID), Len Marino (EID), Don Pearson (EID), Bill Slightam (EID), Carie Hutchings (EID)

WELCOME AND PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTE REVIEW

The Ecological Resources Committee (ERC) convened on Tuesday, May 24, 2005, at approximately 9:10 a.m., at the offices of the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID).

Len Marino, EID Co-Hydro Division Manager, convened the meeting and asked for approval of and/or objections to Minutes from February 16, 2005. Minutes were approved with corrections. The corrected minutes will be posted on the Project 184 website. Stafford Lehr, CDFG, suggested combining the nine, separate PDF files, which would result in one PDF file for the Amphibian Report. Chris Shutes and Alice Howard, ERC Members, would also like to have the files easier to access. It may be difficult for some users to open a large PDF file (more than 1 MG) if they are on dial up or have a slow connection; a suggestion was made to give users options, such as: download, print or preview. Another suggestion was to have a CD or hard copy available to mail out. Cheri Jaggars, EID Project 184 Coordinator, will work with EID's IT Department to see what options are available.

PENDING LICENSE UPDATE

Cheri Jaggars informed the ERC that the pending Project 184 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license is still awaiting the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) 401 certification. EID has hired a consultant to work under the direction of Jim Canaday to prepare the required notices. All notices are ready to go; Jim is completing the Mitigation Monitoring Table. As soon as this is completed there will be a 45 day comment period. The 401 certification should be on the SWRCB August Agenda for approval. After SWRCB approves the 401 certification, FERC approval will be obtained and lastly EID Board approval. EID anticipates having a license from FERC by the end of this year. Stafford Lehr reported that, in a recent SWRCB briefing update, Project 184 was one of SWRCB's top four 401 goals. FERC cannot issue the Project 184 Hydroelectric License prior to the SWRCB 401 certification issuance. FERC is anxious to get this license completed this year. At the end of the year FERC holds a hearing listing any delinquent projects and EID hopes to be off of that list.

WATER YEAR REPORT:

Stream Flow and Water Storage Update

Bill Slightam, EID Hydrographer, referred to two handouts; the Current Reservoir and Outflow Operations and the 2005 Operating Plan which has been used for this year. The total for the American River Watershed this year is 117% of normal. This constitutes a Department of Water Resources (DWR) official “above normal” water year.

Update on the lakes: Every gate is open on the lakes. With the rainfall last week EID is seeing inflows up to 1,500 cfs. An area of concern is Caples Lake, which has 1 ft of ice remaining as of May 23, 2005. Currently, Caples Lake is at 54 ft with 264 cfs outflow. Caples Lake has a spill without spill boards at 59 ft. Until last night (May 23, 2005) lake level increased a foot a day. Last night lake level increase was 1/10 ft. If weather warms Caples Lake may spill within a week. Bill Slightam stated that Caples Lake will be spilling at more than 60 cfs. Len Marino asked what the maximum flow would be coming out of the dam. Bill Slightam estimates 330-335 cfs at full head or 62 ft. On Monday, May 23, 2005 EID put in 2 bays to focus the spill to the middle of the channel. To get a 300 cfs or greater splash boards will need to be in place. Stafford Lehr suggested notifying Cheryl Mulder, USFS, to point out erosion points on the Caples channel and possibly using stick pens or rebar to control channel. Bill Slightam noted that there is a foot of snow on the lake. Bill will be at Caples tomorrow to measure and take photos of the lake(s) for a better idea of a spill date.

The Silver Lake gates have been open all year. The water level has raised 10 ft even with 550 cfs outflow. Inflows at Lake Aloha, Echo and Silver have stabled off the last two days. Last week South Fork peak flow measured at 6,000 cfs. This is the most water in the system since 1983. Richard Wentzel, ERC member, was surprised that flow for the American River Watershed is only 117% of normal. Richard reported that Kirkwood was over 200% of normal. Stafford Lehr pointed out that the report for the American River Watershed was completed May 5, 2005 before the last round of wet weather.

FISH ENHANCEMENT FUND

Tom Henie, Kirkwood Meadows PUD, was not present to give a report. Richard Wentzel will contact Tom Henie to acquire information.

LICENSE IMPLEMENTATION

Cheri Jagers referred to a handout entitled, “El Dorado Irrigation District – Project 184 4E Conditions and Settlement Agreement Sections Due within 1 Year of License.” Recent email communication problems have been encountered between EID and the USFS. About 50% of emails are not received, and no return message is sent to notify the sender of the lack of delivery of the email. Cheri Jagers requested that an email be sent to her to verify that the message has been received to limit the additional time involved with phone calls for receipt verification. Beth Paulson, USFS, stated that the USFS has had server problems. Ms. Paulson inquired as to the purpose of the Pacific Gas &

Electric (PGE) Mokelumne tour. Cheri Jagers answered that EID has been working with Rich Doble, PGE to set up a tour for EID Staff to tour gauging facilities on the Mokelumne Project. Paul Creger would like to have a way to identify 4(e) Conditions and Settlement Agreement Sections within the FERC License and track document changes. Stafford Lehr suggested getting a copy of the current FERC license (when issued) and comparing FERC License references to 4(e) Conditions individually.

Beth Paulson asked what the time frame is on Caples Lake for surveying the spillway. Cheri Jagers noted that EID is trying to get additional staff assigned on these projects. Len Marino is in the process of hiring an additional engineer. EID has more projects than can be handled right now. No timeline is available today, but EID is aware of the many assignments that need to begin. Cheryl Mulder and Beth Paulson are concerned that the project needs to begin now to be completed within the settlement agreement timeline. Cheri Jagers suggested that this could be the focus of the August ERC meeting. Cheryl and Beth concurred.

2005 Summer Calendar

Cheri Jagers referenced the Project 184 – June & July 2005 calendar and verified dates with appropriate Resource Agency Staff.

June 15 - Canal Fencing Site Visit - CDFG, USFS, EID meet at 8:30 a.m.

June 16 - Caples Boat Launch Road – USFS, Cal Trans, Alpine County, EID

June 21-22 - Water Quality Conference – USFS, CDFG, ERC, EID

July 14 - HWY 88 Recreation Tour – USFS, EID

DRAFT PLANS AND STUDIES FOR ERC APPROVAL

2004 Hardhead Monitoring Plan

Per the ERC Agenda the 2005 Monitoring Plans are to be approved today, May 24, 2005. Jann Williams recommended to spot check for Hardhead at 2005 Amphibian survey sites. Stafford Lehr said that no Hardhead have been found upstream (of the current survey site) due to a natural rock barrier in the river. Mr. Lehr recommended that a general location map be included in this report showing the upstream barrier.

Dan Corcoran, EID Environmental Review Manager, recommended that the 2004 Hardhead sites be used in the 2005 Monitoring Plan. It was recommended to review and settle on a 2005 Monitoring Plan at a later date during a conference call with Tom Keegan (ECORP), Stafford Lehr, Jann Williams, Beth Paulson, and Dan Corcoran. A report with the conference call results will be given at the August 23, 2005 ERC meeting.

2004 Amphibian Monitoring Plan

Richard Wentzel expressed that Camp Silverado is not the correct name for the site in this report; the name should be Squaw Creek. Stafford Lehr made a comment on Page 15 recommending that the movement of egg masses be stated “as approved by the California

Department of Fish and Game” and reference Stafford Lehr. Jann Williams would like to have the same surveying done at each interval. Cheri Jagers explained that according to 4(e) Condition 37.3 Mountain Yellow Legged Frogs were only to be surveyed at Lake Aloha in year one and then the full list in year five. Len Marino expressed a desire to stay within the requirements listed in Condition 37.3. Beth Paulson inquired why the proposed monitoring schedule suggests a survey will be completed if one is not intended to be completed. Stafford Lehr would also agree to stay within the requirements listed in Condition 37.3 of the 4(e) Conditions for the License. If there is anything regarding fish or amphibians Stafford Lehr and Jann Williams need to be notified. It was suggested to address this issue in the conference call referred to above. Len Marino presented the 2005 proposed survey sites for Foothill Yellow Legged Frogs. Stafford Lehr stated 207R, 246R, 251R, 266R, 271R do not need to be tested and possibly 235R (to be discussed during conference call). June monitoring will be delayed due to excess rain and colder temperatures, surveying will be delayed to late June or early July. Cheri Jagers asked ERC members if the 2005 Monitoring Plans could be approved during the upcoming conference call with a summary provided to the full ERC and posted on the EID website. The ERC members concurred.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Fish Screen Damage Report

On Monday, May 16, 2005 flows in the South Fork American River reached 6,000 cfs. EID operations staff heard a loud noise and noticed that the fish screen structure had collapsed inward. No debris entered screen. FERC and CDFG were notified immediately. FERC granted permission to divert water without the fish screen structure until May 30, 2005. This has allowed EID to continue to generate power. Daily reports of issues and repair progress are being sent to FERC and CDFG. Stafford Lehr mentioned that damage needs to be assessed and a repair plan completed and sent to him. Len Marino elaborated more on photos during a slide show. Stafford Lehr and Beth Paulson emphasized that the people working in and around high waters should wear lifejackets and/or be attached to a secure life line.

Flume 49 & 50 Repairs

Len Marino reported that the spotted owl surveys have been completed, and no owls have been sighted in the area. The project, to continue removing dead wood by helicopter throughout the summer, has been approved by the U.S. Forest Service.

RECREATION UPDATES

Recreation Implementation Plan –Condition 46

Don Pearson reported the draft plan is complete and has been submitted to the USFS for approval. The goal is to have USFS approval by July 2005. Beth Paulson could not confirm receipt of the plan due to recent USFS computer issues. Cheri Jagers will resend the plan to Beth Paulson.

Caples Lake Boat Facility- Condition 50.4

Don Pearson, EID Director of Recreation, reported that EID submitted a joint (EID, USFS) grant proposal to the California Department of Boating and Waterways (CDBW). CDBW is currently reviewing the grant proposals, and award announcements will be made at the 2006-2007 CDBW annual meeting. The boat ramp would be 100% grant funded. The road to Hwy 88 ramp and turn pocket is not grant funded. Leonard Turnbeaugh asked about the layout. He questioned the difficulty of coming off the ramp turning left or right, once boaters turn they can't reverse. No pull through parking is proposed for larger vehicles. Spaces are only 10 ft. wide. Leonard Turnbeaugh, Alpine County Public Works, suggested moving one dock off the side of ramp instead of having to go to the concrete you would have a two lane ramp without having to add 10 ft. of concrete. The dock doesn't need to be over concrete; why not rip-rap? Don Pearson stated that the concrete under the dock is an operational issue. The specifications came from the CDBW. Cheri Jagers stated that the first step in receiving funding will be to have CDBW come out with engineers to walk the area and negotiate the plan. Mr. Turnbeaugh expressed his concerns with traffic and road accessibility safety. Cheri Jagers shared that the design was difficult to come up with because twenty-five parking spaces are required for a single lane boat ramp. Limitations on design were due to the layout of the existing entrance road. Cheri Jagers stated that in June EID will go on-site with USFS, CalTrans, and Alpine County to review entrance road options and requirements. All of those working on the design want easier accessibility. It was suggested by Leonard Turnbeaugh to work with CalTrans for funding for the intersection onto the highway. Cheri Jagers stated there is much support from the CDBW to have this project completed within 7 years of funding and 10 years if there is no funding.

The EID Silver Lake Campground may not open until late June due to the current snow pack.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

August 23, 2005
October 25, 2005

MEETING ADJOURNED AT NOON.